

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – FEBRUARY 15, 2006

Chairman V. Wilson Freeland called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

Introductory Comments made by Chairman Freeland

- The November 2005 meeting minutes and February 15, 2006 meeting agenda were mailed to the Commission.
- The Commission approved the February 15, 2006 meeting agenda.

Approval for Minutes from November 2005 Meeting

- The November 2005 Meeting Minutes were adopted with one change on page 1(e), under agenda topic “Maryland Farm Bureau Report” – omit the word “Permits.”

DNR Legislative Update

- Presentation given by Paul Peditto, Director and Mark Hoffman, Associate Director.
- Synopsis of 2006 Legislative Session Bills by Paul Peditto:
 - 1) There are two black bear bills, “HB 1436 Establishment of Population in Each County” and “Black Bear Hunt – Prohibition.”
 - 2) There is a Howard County Bill – Steel Jaw Leghold Trap Prohibition Howard County 7-06 - HB 465.
 - 3) Montgomery (HB 939 and SB 875) and Anne Arundel Counties (HB 205 and SB 278) have been submitted to add their counties to the current statutory, “Deer Hunting on Private Lands – Sundays.”
 - 4) There are companion bills to ban Internet hunting (HB 968 and SB 521). This type of hunting would be difficult for an individual to set-up within Maryland borders – it is illegal to have captive cervids without a permit (new permits unavailable), which would be the primary target. Also, a hunter must field tag his or her big game before leaving the harvest site. These bills would prohibit hunting of wildlife through an Internet connection.
 - 5) Bills to permit exemptions from license and stamp requirements (HB 330 and SB 766), would add grandchildren to the list of individuals that may hunt without a license.
- Chairman Freeland asked for a summary of HB 1207 Hunting Wild Waterfowl – Harford and Baltimore Counties.
 - 1) Altering the distance from 800 to 400 yards that a person must be from shore when hunting wild waterfowl in the waters of Harford and Baltimore counties (the Bay shoreline) while the person is standing in water on the natural bottom, in a boat that is drifting or being sculled, or in a boat that is anchored.
 - (a) The Harford and Baltimore Counties Delegations are supporting this bill.
- Mark Hoffman handed out the Wildlife and Heritage Service (WHS) Total Number of Bills Report [**Attachment A**].

Wildlife and Heritage Service FY06 and FY07 Budget Update

- Presentation given by Paul Peditto, Director and Mark Hoffman, Associate Director.
- Mark Hoffman distributed the DNR Allowance with Funds by Unit/Object Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 Budget Request [**Attachment B**].
- Summary of the Department of Natural Resources WHS FY 07 Budget Request:
 - 1) Three Important columns:
 - (a) The first column is the amount WHS requested and submitted to the Department of Budget Management (DBM).
 - (b) The second column illustrates the DBM allowance; or the amount DBM submits to the Governor.
 - (c) The third column displays the appropriation; or the amount requested by the Governor to the General Assembly for their approval (unavailable at this time).
- Commissioner Lamp handed out Maryland Hunting License Holders from 1983 – 2003 Chart [**Attachment C**], which shows a 29 percent decline in hunting license sales in the 20-year period. Commissioner Lamp suggested that the continuous decrease of hunting-license funding, along with the additional license and stamps exemptions, will eventually cause the WHS to cease operations.
- Commissioner Adams mentioned that nationally there exists a model for broadening public support for wildlife conservation through funding efforts; this effort is known as the Wildlife Diversity Initiative. Commissioner Adams outlined background information on the initiative.
 - 1) In 1980, the Forsythe-Chaffee Act (Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act) was passed; unfortunately, the funding was never forthcoming. The Act was intended to underwrite non-game species management.
 - 2) Advance to the 1990’s, the Teaming With Wildlife was formed (a coalition of state management agencies). The Maryland Coalition had broad based support with a number of commercial groups involved; including: Maryland Sportsmen Association, Audubon Society, and businesses that supported the need for a wildlife conservation long-term funding source.
 - (a) Teaming With Wildlife supported the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA).

- (b) This act would have guaranteed a long-term funding source to support efforts in state, federal, and local conservation programs.
 - (c) CARA passed a House vote in 2000 and 2001; it never made it to the Senate floor.
 - (d) Members from Teaming With Wildlife met with the Senators and House of Representatives at the Congressional level to secure a long-term funding source for wildlife conservation.
 - (e) The Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations Act provided a funding source for the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCRP).
- 3) Currently, the State Wildlife Grants is the next funding source for wildlife conservation.
 - 4) The ultimate outcome is to have a Maryland model with the same type of approach as the National Coalition.
 - (a) Members of Maryland's Coalition would target the State Delegation for long-term funding resources for wildlife conservation.
 - (b) This is important since the Wildlife and Heritage Service provides assistance for all Marylanders but receives almost zero general funds.
- **Motion:**
 - 1) Commissioner Lamp moved that WAC go directly to the Governor to request for additional general funds to support the Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Heritage Service for their efforts for managing wildlife for all Marylanders. Commission Adams seconded the motion.
 - 2) Discussion on the motion:
 - (a) Chairman Freeland reminded the members that this is an Advisory Commission to the Secretary. Any recommendations are required to go through the Secretary and not go directly to the Governor's Office.
 - (b) Commissioner Adams recommended that Chairman Freeland communicate this issue to the Secretary to see if there is an appropriate avenue for this body to take to make the point that there exists a shortage of general funds for the WHS – this needs to be recognize at the highest level.
 - (c) Commissioner Lamp handed out copies of the article from The Capital, "South River catfish have cancer – Researchers still unsure of cause of tumors." [Attachment D] Without designated funding sources to address the potential threats to Maryland's natural resources (such as the one in this article), Marylanders will not be able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environmental resources for long with the current system in place.
 - (d) The hunting license fee increase generated \$1.2 million in new special funds revenue (supported by the hunters and MSA) and was eliminated by the Executive and legislative branches within two years.
 - (e) The specific need this year is \$330,000 in operational funding but the long-term need is in excess of \$1.5 million in supplemental general funds.
 - 3) **Motion amended:**
 - (a) Commissioner Lamp amended the motion to read that the Wildlife Advisory Commission send a strong letter directly to the Secretary requesting \$330,000 additional funds to support and alleviate the shortfall in the 2007 budget, and then ask the Secretary to forward our recommendation to the Governor; and inform the Secretary that the members are available to lobby support for this recommendation to the Governor.
 - (b) Motion carried with 2-no and 3-yes.

2006 Working Agenda Topics

- Wildlife and Heritage Service (WHS) and Natural Resources Police (NRP) met and discussed the "live decoy issue" on Friday, February 10th. At the end of March, a smaller group of WHS and NRP staff will meet to formulate a set of proposals. Those proposals will be presented to the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee shortly thereafter.
- Live Decoy Discussion was added to the June 21, 2006 WAC agenda.
- The 10-Year Deer Management Plan Discussion was added to the July 19, 2006 WAC agenda.

Break from 10:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Natural Resources Police Update

- Sergeant Glenn Shultz highlighted the Natural Resources Police Update from November 15, 2005 through February 2, 2006 [Attachment E].
- Commissioners may contact Sergeant Shultz about any case listed by means of e-mail at gshultz@dnr.state.md.us.

2006-2008 Hunting Regulations Proposals

- Presentation given by Robert Beyer, Associate Director, Game Management Program.
- Robert Beyer provided the Maryland Reported Antlered and Antlerless Deer Harvest by County for the Bow, Firearms, and Muzzleloader 2005-2006 Hunting Seasons [Attachment F] to the Commission.
- The vast majority of hunters embraced the new electronic Deer and Turkey Checking System. Staff members received the data expeditiously. Law Enforcement agreed that the officers are able to review the information faster to ensure that hunters are complying with Maryland's laws and regulations.

- 1) Comments were received about the material used for field tags (could not write on them with a ballpoint pen). Staff members are looking into other materials for the field tags.
 - 2) Previous licensed check-in stations complained that they have been losing revenue due to the new Deer and Turkey Checking System. WHS decided to schedule a statewide contest to hopefully facilitate some traffic for the stores and restore some of the camaraderie associated with the former check-station model. Staff members are working on the contest details.
- Mr. Beyer handed out the “DNR Announces Meeting Schedule to Present Proposed Hunting and Trapping Season Dates and Regulation Changes” [**Attachment G**].
 - Lengthy discussion in reference to the stakeholders meeting.
 - Mr. Beyer highlighted the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 hunting season proposals.
 - The Resident Population Canada Goose (RP) season must be within the federal frameworks.
 - With autumn and winter sora rails at historically low levels in Maryland, Commissioner Adams questioned the maintenance of a 25-bird bag limit on the species. He argued that bag limits and hunting seasons should be adjusted in relation to game population size and a high bag limit on sora rails is inconsistent with that practice.
 - Commissioner Lamp handed out copies of an article from New Jersey, “A hunt doesn’t bear scrutiny” [**Attachment H**].
 - Captive Deer Herds – under new individualized amnesty, we had four landowners voluntary consent to give up their deer. There are only 18 permittees with 200 deer in captivity left in Maryland.

Maryland Park Service Update

- No Report

Old Business

- Urban Wildlife Subcommittee – Focus on Membership {Chairman Freeland handed out three documents.}
 - 1) Draft Letter Invitation for Membership [**Attachment I**]
 - 2) **Motion:** Commission approval for the draft letter. Commissioner Adams seconded. Motion carried.
 - 3) Operational Guidelines for the Urban Wildlife Subcommittee of the Maryland WAC [**Attachment J**]
 - 4) List of Names for Membership with some remaining slots [**Attachment K**]
 - 5) Chairman Freeland asked for other recommendations to the Urban Wildlife Subcommittee.
 - 6) **Motion:** Commissioner Adams motioned to mail the invitation letter. Commissioner Lamp seconded. Motion carried.

New Business

- The Commission received a letter from a concerned constituent regarding poachers and allegations toward NRP (**members were mailed copies of the letter**).
- Commissioner Brown emphasized that it would be appropriate to send an acknowledgement letter that his letter has been forwarded to the appropriate unit; and includes a statement that the matter is being reviewed. Chairman Freeland concurred. Chairman Freeland will draft a response letter to the constituent.
- Chairman Freeland agreed to circulate the constituent letter to other units in DNR. Paul Peditto gave a copy of the letter to Sergeant Shultz.
- Vice-Chair Appointment – Commissioner Lowell Adams will continue as vice-chair until his replacement.
- Commissioner Adams has tickets to the Ducks Unlimited Banquet through the University of Maryland; this is a new chapter for the University. The event is scheduled for Monday, March 6th at 7:00 p.m. Parking available at the golf course.
- Commissioner Lamp asked the Commission to consider changing the meeting times from 9:30 a.m. to an evening time to allow more public participation. Chairman Freeland deferred this discussion to the March 15th meeting.

Adjournment

- Chairman Freeland adjourned meeting at 12:10 P.M. The next meeting will be held at 9:30 A.M. on Wednesday, March 15, 2006 in the Tawes State Office Building, C-1 Conference Room, in Annapolis, Maryland.

Attendance

Members:	L. Adams, R. Brown, G. Fratz, W. Freeland, L. Julio, J. Lamp
Guests:	D. Baker III
Staff:	B. Beyer, K. Blizzard, M. Hoffman, D. Hotton, B. King, P. Peditto, G. Shultz, T. Spencer
Absent:	C. Garner, R. Pascal, J. Scarborough